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ON PAGE 4-7

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Spy arrest scandalizes Norwegians

OSLO (Reuters) — The first arrest of a high-ranking Norwegian official for spying for the Soviet Union has scandalized the political and diplomatic establishment here and is bound to affect relations between Oslo and Moscow, political sources said yesterday.

Politicians and diplomats professed shock and disbelief at news of the arrest Friday of Arne Treholt, chief of a section in the Foreign Ministry, in what is widely considered to be the biggest spy scandal in Norway since World War II.

Mr. Treholt, 41, was widely known in political circles and once was a prominent figure in key Norwegian-Soviet negotiations on territorial and fishing rights.

Authorities said he was arrested while on his way to a meeting with Soviet agents in Paris.

Attorney General Magnar Flornes said Mr. Treholt was carrying classified documents and admitted to having handed over similar papers to members of the Soviet secret police, the KGB, several times.

Mr. Treholt was junior minister for the law of the sea in the Labor Party government of Odvar Nordli in the mid-1970s and was prominent in talks with the Soviet Union regarding the potentially oil-rich Barents Sea shelf and fisheries inspection in the same area.

He had access to highly classified documents on Norwegian political deliberations and negotiating strategy, the sources said.

Later he pursued a diplomatic career, serving with the Norwegian delegation to the United Nations, where he worked primarily on economic questions, they said.

After attending the Norwegian Defense College he rejoined the Foreign Office in Oslo, where he was recently appointed head of section in the Information Department. There he handled press coverage of last week's visit by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz.